

# Hariyo Ban Program

## Internal Governance Tool 2 Participatory Well-Being Ranking (PWBR)



Strengthening the internal governance of natural resource management groups is a cross-cutting theme across the Hariyo Ban Program components. It is very important since many rural people in Nepal are highly dependent on forests for their livelihoods and wellbeing. This includes forest resources such as firewood, clean water, building materials, fodder for livestock, and medicinal plants, as well as ecosystem services such as protection from landslides and floods. Many rural poor may hence exert the highest pressures on forests because they have no alternatives. Yet they often have little say in how forests are managed and how the benefits from sustainable forest management are distributed.

Internal governance strengthening builds the capacity of Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups and other community organizations, as well as people in leadership positions, and increases levels of meaningful participation by women and other marginalized groups. This in turn promotes the equitable sharing of resources and other benefits. Internal governance strengthening is achieved through the use of a number of different tools specified in the Community Forestry Development Guidelines of 2009. Hariyo Ban Program uses three such tools as identified in Community Forestry Development Guidelines of 2009. They are:

- Tool 1: Public Hearing and Public Auditing (PHPA)
- Tool 2: Participatory Well-Being Ranking (PWBR)
- Tool 3: Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA)

Participatory Well-Being Ranking is used to identify poor households and individuals so that poverty reduction support can be provided through community forestry initiatives. The Community Forestry Development Guidelines of 2009 states that: 'community forest user group members generally have different socio-economic status and thus their problems, needs and capacity may also be different. So, it is good to plan activities by identifying the users with differing socio-economic status. For this a participatory well-being ranking should be conducted to identify which households fall under poor, medium and well-off categories' (Chapter II, article 2.4, page 6 and 7). In view of this, and based on learning and best practice from the SAGUN program<sup>1</sup>, the Hariyo Ban Program has committed to using the Participatory Well-Being Ranking tool.

### What is Participatory Well-Being Ranking?

Participatory Well-Being Ranking is a process by which a group of households are asked to rank themselves according to economic and social status. The process is conducted by Forest User Groups with the assistance of local resource persons acting as facilitators. Households are generally described as either well-off, middle income, or poor, although some households may be described as extremely poor. Following the ranking exercise, and based on the resources available to the Forest User Group, livelihood support initiatives are identified and implemented to support poor and extremely poor households. This tool directly supports the provision in the Community Forestry Development Guidelines 2009 earmarking 35% of total group funds for pro-poor livelihood support activities.

### Why Conduct a Participatory Well-Being Ranking?

Participatory Well-Being Ranking processes are based on the assumption that development initiatives can only be termed sustainable and equitable if both the duty bearers and rights holders internalize and practice the principles of good governance. By categorizing households as being well-off, middle income or poor based on an assessment of financial, natural, physical, human and social assets, the process helps groups to allocate resources to poor

<sup>1</sup> Strengthened Actions for Governance in Utilization of Natural Resources (SAGUN) Program (2002-2006)

and extremely poor households on a more equitable basis. Poor households get access to group funds which they can use to support a range of income generating activities that help to reduce pressure on forest resources. Increased incomes are likely to improve the capacity of households to adapt in adverse environmental conditions.

## The Participatory Well-Being Ranking Process

The process has three main phases:

### i) Preparatory Phase

Program staff and facilitators deliver an orientation session on the Participatory Well-Being Ranking process and associated objectives to the User Group's executive committee and members. Executive committee members and facilitators then prepare a list of the names of the heads of all member households. Date, time and venue for the ranking exercise are announced. Other local stakeholders are also invited.

### ii) Participatory Well-Being Ranking Phase

Facilitators lead the discussion, ensuring that as much interaction as possible takes place. At least 75% of all member households should participate in the process. Participants choose the criteria they will use to categorize households. Common criteria include:

- Land holdings and other property
- Availability of food grains
- Education level of family members
- Family size

- Income from employment and remittance
- Social status within the community
- Vulnerability to climate hazards

Each household is ranked according to each of the criteria and, on the basis of this information, households are categorized as well-off, middle income, or poor. Extremely poor households are also identified so that special livelihood support initiatives can be designed based on their needs and interests. User Groups are required to allocate 35% of total group funds to extremely poor member households through livelihood improvement plans. Actual amounts will depend on resources available. The livelihood improvement plan should include an analysis of the household's financial, natural, physical, human and social assets, and the desired outcome following plan implementation. Livelihood improvement plans help to diversify the livelihood options available to extremely poor households, and help to reduce long-term vulnerabilities.

### iii) Follow-up

The results of Participatory Well-Being Ranking exercises can be used by Forest User Groups in the preparation and updating of Forest Operational Plans, and User Group constitutions. Regular follow up for action plans developed during the process and for livelihood improvement plans is essential. Information collected during ranking exercises also provides a baseline for the Hariyo Ban Program to assess changes in the livelihoods of poor forest users over a period of time.



*The Hariyo Ban Program is named after the famous Nepali saying 'Hariyo Ban Nepal ko Dhan' (Healthy green forests are the wealth of Nepal). It is a USAID funded initiative that aims to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and threats to biodiversity in Nepal. This will be accomplished by working with the government, communities, civil society and private sector. In particular, the Hariyo Ban Program works to empower Nepal's local communities in safeguarding the country's living heritage and adapting to climate change through sound conservation and livelihood approaches. Thus the Program emphasizes the links between people and forests and is designed to benefit nature and people in Nepal. At the heart of Hariyo Ban lie three interwoven components – biodiversity conservation, payments for ecosystem services including REDD+ and climate change adaptation. These are supported by livelihoods, governance, and gender and social inclusion as cross-cutting themes. A consortium of four non-governmental organizations is implementing the Hariyo Ban Program with WWF Nepal leading the consortium alongside CARE Nepal, FECOFUN and NTNC.*



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